Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
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R 201520Z JAN 78
FM AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1468
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL NICE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FR
SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE ELECTION PROSPECTS IN THE CONSULAR DISTRICT

1) SUMMARY

THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTION SITUATION AT THIS EARLY DATE IN THE CONSULAR DISTRICT SHOWS THE MAJORITY OF ITS FORTY DEPUTY SEATS PROBABLY REMAINING IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CURRENT POLITICAL CAMPS. HOWEVER, SOME IMPORTANT SHIFTS DO SEEM POSSIBLE FOR THE TWENTY PERCENT SEATS THAT ARE IN DOUBT, AND IF THOSE SHIFTS DO OCCUR THE PC WOULD COME AWAY THE REAL ELECTION WINNER AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PS.

2) CURRENT OUTLOOK

IN FIFTEEN OF OUR FORTY CONSCRIPTIONS THE PRESENT ENCUMBET WILL NOT BE RUNNING, VIZ: THE AUDE'S THREE SEATS, THREE OF THE VAR'S FOUR SEATS, TWO EACH IN THE VAUCLUSE (HAVING
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THREE SEATS), THE GARD (HAVING FOUR SEATS), THE BOUCHES-DU-RHONE (11 SEATS IN ALL), AND ONE SEAT EACH IN THE AVEYRON, HERAULT, AND TARN (EACH OF WHICH HAS THREE, FIVE, AND THREE SEATS RESPECTIVELY). GOING INTO THE ELECTIONS, THE LEFT HOLDS 31 SEATS AND THE MAJORITE NINE. AT PRESENT TWENTY SIX SEATS APPEAR SECURE FOR THE LEFT AND SIX FIRMLY MAJORITE. THE POSSIBLE CHANGES ARE ONE PS AND TXO RPR SEATS

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GOING OVER TO THE PC, AND A SURPRISING FIVE PS SEATS SHIFTING
TO THE MAJORITE (THREE TO THE PR AND TWO TO THE RPR). SHOUL
THESE CHANGES INDEED OCCUR, THE NEW PROFILE WOULD BE TWENTY
NINE SEATS FOR THE LEFT, AND ELEVEN MAJORITE. THIS SCENARIO
WOULD GIVE THE REAL NET WIN TO THE PC BY ADDING THREE SEATS
TO ITS PRESENT HOLDING OF ELEVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PS
(WHOSE SIXTEEN SEATS WOULD SLIP TO ELEVEN.) THE MRG WOULD
HAVE TXO SEATS (VICE ONE PRESENTLY) AND THE MAJORITE S TEN
WOULD BE SPLIT AMONG THE PR S FIVE (GAIN OF TWO SEATS), THE
RPR S FIVE, (LOSS OF ONE SEAT) AND THE CDS RETAINING ITS
SINGLE SEAT.

3. LITTLE CHANGE IN DEFFERRE COUNTRY

THERE IS SCANT INDICATION OF ANY MOVEMENT AMONG THE BOUCHES-
DU-RHONE'S ELEVEN SEATS. MARSEILLE'S MAYOR GASTON DEFFERRE
AND TWO OF HIS THREE PS TEANMATES SEEM CERTAIN TO WIN,
AND THE PC PROBABLY WILL KEEP ITS SIX SEATS. THE SINGLE
BIG BATTLE NOW IS BETWEEN EMILE LOO(PS) AND FORMER RPR
DEPUTY PIERRE LUCAS IN MARSEILLE S SECOND WARD, AN
UPPER-MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD OCCUPIED PRINCIPALLY
BY PROFESSIONALS, EXECUTIVES, AND ENTREPRENEURS. LUCS LOST
TO LOO IN 1973 DUE TO UNISPIRED PERFORMANCE AT THE SECOND
TOUR POLLS BY MAJORITE SUPPORTERS AND STRONG VOTING ATTENDANCE
BY OPPOSING PS-PC FORCES. THIS YEAR THE OUTLOOK IS FOR MORE
UNIFIED MAJORITE SUPPORT AND LESS INSPIRATION AMONG THE PC,
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AND IF SO THERE IS A STRONG CHANCE THE MAJORITE WILL GAIN
THE SEAT.

4. CHANGE POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE VAUCLUSE

A) AVIGNON

WELL-LIKED CONSERVATIVE MAYOR DUFFAUT (PS) RELINQUISHED HIS
DEPUTY SEAT FOR THAHT OF A SENATOR LAST YEAR. HE AND HIS
PARTY ARE BACKING A MR. SARFATI WHO BEARS AN MRG LABEL.
SARFATI, A PROFESSOR AT AVIGNON'S UNIVERSITY AND NOT
ORIGINALLY FROM THE AREA, HAS LITTLE LOCAL PROFILE AND
NO TRACK RECORD. HE IS COMPETING AGAINST RPR CANDIDATE ROUX,
A LOCAALY WELL KNOWN AND WELL LIKED FIGURE WHO LOST HIS
DEPUTY SEAT TO DUFFAUT IN 1973 BY A 5 PER CENT MARGIN
BASED LARGELY ON DUFFAUT S GREATER LOCAL POPULARITY. AVIGNON
HAS A STRONG STRAIN OF CONSERVATIVE TRADITIONALISM, AND
IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT A MAJORITY OF ITS VOTERS WILL
TURN TO ROUX AS A MORE ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SARFATI,
THUS MOVING A SEAT FROM THE PS TO THE RPR.

B) ORANGE AND CARPENTRAS

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BOTH CITIES SEEM POISED FOR A CHANGE OF LEGISLATIVE LOYALTIES, THE FORMER GOING FROM RPR TO PC AND THE LATTER FROM PS TO PR. AT ORANGE, RECENT GAINS IN PC VOTER STRENGTH THREATEN THE REELECTION OF RPR ENCUMBENT BERARD WHO WON AGAINST THE 1973 PC CANDIDATE BY A MERE 160 VOTES. AT NEARBY CARPENTRAS, PS DEPUTY LEENHARDT WILL NOT BE RUNNING AND NO PS CANDIDATE IS BEING PUT FORWARD. MAYOR CHARRETIER, THE PR CANDIDATE, PROBABLY WILL GAIN A SIZEABLE ADVANTAGE FROM THE CONTINUING LOCAL PS/PC SPLIT, A LOCAL ESSENTIAL CONSERVATISM, PLUS FAVORABLE ECONOMIC SITUATION, AND GAIN A SEAT FOR THE MAJO-RITE.

5. INTERESTING CONTESTS ELSEWHERE
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1) CHIEF AMONG THE BETTER KNOWN NAMES WHOM WE THINK WILL KEEP THEIR SEATS ARE MRG LEADER ROBERT FABRE, MAYOR JOURDAN (PC) OF NIMES, RPR STALWART LIMOUZY AT CASTRES (NOTWITHSTANDING HIS LOSS OF THE MAIRIE TO A PC CANDIDATE ON A MINOR LOCAL ISSUE LAST YEAR), THE INDEPENDENT-MINDED ALDUY (DIV. G) AT PERPIGNAN, AND RPR S BENARD AT HYERES WHO IS SEEDED TO WIN OVER UP AND COMING FREJUS PR MAYOR LEOTARD (SEE LE POINT 16 JAN. 78 PAGE 58).

2) MONTPELLIER'S PS MAYOR FRECHE, WHO GAINED HIS DEPUTY SEAT BY A 600 VOTE MARGIN IN 1973, IS BEING CHALLENGED BY LONG-TIME LOCAL FAVORITE PR CONTENDER FRANCOIS DELMAS WHO AS AN INDEPENDENT SERVED AS MONTPELLIER S MAYOR FOR MANY YEARS. DELMAS LOST CITY HALL TO FRECHE LAST YEAR IN A SURPRISING UPSET FUELED BY NEW STUDENT VOTERS AT MONTPELLIER S UNIVERSITY WHERE FRECHE WAS A WELL-LIKED PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS, PC BLOCK VOTING, AND AN UNEXPECTED FALL-OFF OF MODERATE-VOTER ATTENDANCE AT THE POLLS IN THE SECOND TOUR. NOW, HOWEVER, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE PS/PC INFIGHTING, STUDENTS WHO BACKED FRECHE'S CANDIDACY ON LOCAL ISSUES MAY HAVE LESS VOTING INTEREST IN MORE DISTTANT LEGISLATIVE MATTERS, AND DELMAS HAS MOUNTED AN INTELLIGENT, WELL-ORGANIZED AND HARD HITTING CAMPAIGN. THESE FACTORS MAY COALESCE TO MOVE FRECH'E'S PS SEAT OVER TO THE MAJORITY.
MEIMA

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